FLORIO:

A TALE,

FOR FINE GENTLEMEN AND FINE LADIES:

AND,

The BAS BLEU;

OR,

CONVERSATION:

TWO POEMS.

Miss Hannah More

LONDON,

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TO THE

Hon. HORACE WALPOLE.

SIR,

IT would be very flattering to me, if I might hope that the little Tale, which I now take the liberty of preſenting to you, could amuſe a few moments of your tedious indiſpoſition. It is, I confeſs, but a paltry return for the many hours of agreeable information, and elegant amuſement, which I have received from your ſpirited and very entertaining writings: yet

I am perſuaded, that you will receive it with favour, as a ſmall offering of eſteem and gratitude, of which the intention alone makes all the little value.

The ſlight verſes, Sir, which I place under your protection, will not, I fear, impreſs the world with a very favourable idea of my poetical powers: But I ſhall, at leaſt, be ſuſpected of having ſome taſte, and of keeping good company, when I confeſs that ſome of the pleaſanteſt hours of my life have been paſſed in your converſation. I ſhould be unjuſt to your very engaging and well-bred turn of wit, if I did not declare that, among all the lively and brilliant things I have heard from you, I do not remember ever to have heard an unkind, or an ungenerous one: Let me be allowed to bear my feeble teſtimony to your temperate uſe of this charming faculty, ſo delightful in itſelf,

itſelf, but which can only be ſafely truſted in ſuch hands as yours, where it is guarded by politeneſs, and directed by humanity.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your much obliged,

And moſt obedient

Humble Servant,

HANNAH MORE.

JANUARY 27, 1786.

DEDICATION.

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FOR FINE GENTLEMEN AND FINE LADIES.

FLORIO, a youth of gay renown,
Who figur'd much about the Town,
Had paſs'd, with general approbation,
The modiſh forms of Education;
Knew what was proper to be known,
Th' eſtabliſh'd jargon of Bon-ton;

Had learnt, with very moderate reading,
The whole new ſyſtem of good breeding:
Knew to be negligent and rude;
But ſtill his feelings wou'd intrude:
For FLORIO was not meant by nature,
A ſilly, or a worthleſs creature:
He had a heart diſpos'd to feel,
Had ſenſe and ſpirit, taſte and zeal;
Was handſome, generous; but, by fate,
Predeſtin'd to a large eſtate!
Hence all the hopes he gave were foil'd;
His mind by praiſe and pleaſure ſpoil'd.
The Deſtiny, who wove the thread
Of FLORIO's being, ſigh'd, and ſaid,
Poor youth! this cumbrous twiſt of gold,
More than my ſhuttle well can hold,

For which thy anxious fathers toil'd,
Thy white and even thread has ſpoil'd:
This ſhall ſeduce thy pliant youth
From ſenſe, ſimplicity, and truth;
Thy erring ſire, by this miſled,
Shall ſcatter pleaſures round thy head,
When wholeſome diſcipline's controul,
Shou'd brace the ſinews of thy ſoul;
Coldly thou'lt toil for Learning's prize,
For why ſhou'd he that's rich be wiſe?

The gracious Maſter of mankind,
Who knew us vain, and weak, and blind,
In mercy, tho' in anger, ſaid,
That man ſhou'd earn his daily bread;
Who counteracts the order given,
Diſputes the high beheſt of Heaven.

Forgive (nor lay the fault on me)
This mixture of mythology;
The bard of Paradiſe has deign'd
With truth to mingle fables feign'd;
Who cannot reach his ſtyle, or thoughts,
With eaſe may imitate his faults.

Poor FLORIO, at the ardent age
When youth ſhou'd ruſh on Glory's ſtage;
When Life ſhou'd open freſh and fair,
And Hope advance with ſmiling air;
Of youthful gaiety bereft,
Had ſcarce an unbroach'd pleaſure left;
He found already to his coſt,
The ſhining gloſs of life was loſt;
And Pleaſure was ſo coy a prude,
She fled the more the more purſued.

But FLORIO knew the WORLD, that Science
Set Senſe and Learning at defiance;
He thought the world to him was known,
Whereas he only knew the *Town*;
In men this blunder ſtill you find,
All think their little ſet—Mankind.

Tho' high renown the youth had gain'd,
No flagrant crimes his life had ſtain'd;
No tool of falſehood, ſlave of paſſion,
But ſpoilt by CUSTOM, and the FASHION.
Tho' known among *a certain ſet*,
He did not like to be in debt;
He ſhudder'd at the dicer's box,
Nor thought it very heterodox
That tradeſmen ſhou'd be ſometimes paid,
And promiſes be kept when made.

His utmoſt credit, as a ſinner,
Was that he ſometimes ſpoilt a dinner;
Ever, by ſyſtem, came too late,
And made his choiceſt parties wait;
Yet 'twas a hopeful indication,
On which to found a reputation:
Small habits, well purſued betimes,
May reach the dignity of crimes.

His mornings were not ſpent in vice,
'Twas lounging, ſauntering, eating ice:
Walk up and down St. James's Street,
Full fifty times the youth you'd meet:
He hated cards, deteſted drinking,
But ſtroll'd to ſhun the toil of thinking;
'Twas doing nothing was his curſe,
Is there a vice can plague us worſe?

The wretch who digs the mine for bread,
Or ploughs, that others may be fed,
Feels leſs fatigue than that decreed
To him who cannot think, or read.
Not all the ſtruggle of temptation,
Not all the furious war of paſſion,
Can quench the ſpark of Glory's flame,
Or blot out Virtue's very name;
Like the true taſte for genuine ſaunter,
No rival paſſions can ſupplant her;
They rule in ſhort and quick ſucceſſion,
But SLOTH keeps one long, faſt poſſeſſion;
Ambition's reign is quickly clos'd,
Th' uſurper Rage is ſoon depos'd;
Intemperance, where there's no temptation,
Makes voluntary abdication;

Of other tyrants ſhort the ſtrife,
But INDOLENCE is king for life.
Yet tho' ſo poliſh'd FLORIO's breeding,
Think him not ignorant of reading;
For he, to keep him from the vapours,
Subſcrib'd at HOOKHAM's, ſaw the papers;
Was deep in Poet's-corner wit,
Knew what was in Italics writ;
Explain'd fictitious names at will,
Each gutted ſyllable cou'd fill;
There oft, in paragraphs, his name
Gave ſymptom ſweet of growing fame,
Tho' yet they ſerv'd but to apprize
Of buttons' form, or buckles' ſize.
He ſtudied while he dreſs'd, for true 'tis
He read Compendiums, Extracts, Beauties,

Abregés,

Abregés, Dictionnaires, Recueils,
Mercures, Journaux, Extraits, and Feuilles:
No work in ſubſtance now is follow'd,
The Chemic Extract only's ſwallow'd.
He lik'd thoſe literary cooks
Who ſkim the cream of others' books,
And ruin half an Author's graces,
By plucking bons-mots from their places;
He wonders any writing ſells,
But theſe ſpic'd muſhrooms and morells;
His palate theſe alone can touch,
Where every mouthful is *bonne bouche.*
Of each new Play he ſaw a part,
And all the *Anas* had by heart;
He found whatever they produce
Is fit for converſation-uſe;

Is ever ready for diſplay;
A page would prime him for a day:
They cram not with a maſs of knowledge,
Which ſmacks of toil, and ſmells of college,
Which in the memory uſeleſs lies,
And only makes men—good and wiſe.

A friend he had, BELLARIO hight,
A reaſoning, reading, learned wight;
At leaſt, with men of FLORIO's breeding,
He was a prodigy of reading.
He knew each ſtale and vapid lye
In tomes of French Philoſophy;
And then, we fairly may preſume,
From PYRRHO down to DAVID HUME,
'Twere difficult to ſingle out
A man more full of ſhallow doubt;

He knew the little ſceptic prattle,
The ſophiſt's paltry arts of battle;
Talk'd gravely of th' atomic dance,
Of moral fitneſs, fate, and chance;
Quoted the nonſenſe of LUCRETIUS,
Stripp'd of the charm which makes it ſpecious;
Dropt hints, with wondrous penetration,
Againſt the hiſtory of Creation;
Then prov'd, by argument circuitous,
The combination was fortuitous:
Swore, Prieſts whole trade was to deceive,
And prey on bigots who believe;
With bitter ridicule cou'd jeer,
And had the true free-thinking ſneer;
Stale arguments he had in ſtore,
Which have been anſwer'd o'er and o'er.

Practis'd, to raiſe his reputation,
The trite, old trick of falſe citation;
And wou'd from ancient Authors quote
A ſentiment they never wrote.
Upon his higheſt ſhelf there ſtood
The Claſſics, neatly cut in wood;
And in a more commodious ſtation,
You found them in a French tranſlation:
He ſwears, 'tis from the Greek he quotes,
But keeps the French, juſt for the notes.
He worſhipp'd certain modern names
Who Hiſtory write in Epigrams,
In pointed periods, ſhining phraſes,
And all the ſmall poetic daiſies,
Which crowd the pert and florid ſtyle,
Where fact is dropt to raiſe a ſmile;

Arts ſcorn'd by Hiſtory's ſober Muſe,
Arts CLARENDON diſdain'd to uſe.
Whate'er the ſubject of debate,
'Twas larded ſtill with ſceptic prate;
The good, with ſhame I ſpeak it, feel
Not half this proſelyting zeal.
Tho' FLORIO did not yet believe him,
He thought, why ſhou'd a friend deceive him?
Much as he priz'd BELLARIO's wit,
He lik'd not all his notions yet;
He thought him charming, pleaſant, odd,
But hop'd he might believe in God;
Still, tho' he tried a thouſand ways,
Truth's inſuppreſſive torch wou'd blaze;
Where once her flame has burnt, I doubt
If ever it go fairly out.

Yet,

Yet, under great BELLARIO's care,
He gain'd each day a better air;
With many a leader of renown,
Deep in the learning of the Town,
Who never other ſcience knew,
But what from that prime ſource they drew;
Pleas'd, to the opera they repair,
To get recruits of knowledge there;
Mythology gain at a glance,
And learn the Claſſics from a dance:
For tho' they never car'd a groat,
How far'd the vent'rous Argonaut,
Yet, pleas'd, they ſee MEDEA riſe
On fiery dragons to the ſkies:
For DIDO, tho' they never knew her
As MARO's magic pencil drew her,

Fond

Fond as ſhe was, and broken-hearted,
Her pious vagabond departed;
Yet, for DIDONE how they roar!
And *Cara! Cara!* loud encore.

One taſte, BELLARIO's ſoul poſſeſs'd,
The maſter paſſion of his breaſt;
Not one of thoſe frail, tranſient joys,
Which, by poſſeſſion, quickly cloys;
This bliſs was ſolid, conſtant, true,
'Twas action, and 'twas paſſion too;
For tho' the buſineſs might be finiſh'd,
The pleaſure ſcarcely was diminiſh'd;
Did he ride out, or ſit, or walk,
Still he liv'd o'er again in talk
This keen, this ever new delight,
His joy by day, his dream by night.

'Twas

'Twas eating did his ſoul allure,
In ſhort, a modiſh Epicure;
Tho' once this word, as I opine,
Meant not ſuch men as live to dine,
Yet all our modern Wits aſſure us,
That's all they know of EPICURUS:
They fondly fancy, that repletion
Was the *chief good* of that fam'd Grecian.
To live in gardens full of flowers,
And talk philoſophy in bowers,
Or, in the covert of a wood,
To deſcant on the *ſovereign good*,
Might be the notion of their founder,
But they have notions vaſtly ſounder;
Their bolder ſtandards they erect,
To form a more voluptuous ſect;

Old

Old EPICURUS wou'd not own 'em,
A dinner is their *ſummum bonum.*
You'll rather find ſuch ſparks as theſe
Like EPICURUS' deities;
Like them they laugh at human cares,
And with diſdain view all affairs.
BELLARIO had embrac'd with glee,
This practical philoſophy.

Young FLORIO's father had a friend,
And ne'er did Heaven a worthier ſend;
A cheerful knight of good eſtate,
Whoſe heart was warm, whoſe bounty great.
At Chriſtmas ſtill his oxen bled,
With which the grateful poor were fed;
Reſentment vaniſh'd where he came,
And law-ſuits died before his name;

The old eſteem'd, the young careſs'd him,
And all the ſmiling village bleſs'd him.
Within his Caſtle's Gothic gate,
Sate Plenty, and old-faſhion'd State:
Scarce Prudence cou'd his bounties ſtint;—
Such characters are out of print:
O! wou'd kind Heaven, the age to mend,
A new edition of them ſend,
Before our tottering Caſtles fall,
And ſwarming Nabobs ſeize on all!

Some little whims he had, 'tis true,
But they were harmleſs, and were few;
He dreaded nought like alteration,
Improvement ſtill was innovation;
He ſaid, when any change was brewing,
Reform was a fine name for ruin;

He

He thought 'twou'd ſhew a falling ſtate,
If STERNHOLD ſhou'd give way to TATE.
This ever dwelt upon his tongue,
How things were chang'd ſince he was young!
Of moderate parts, of moderate wit,
But parts for life and buſineſs fit:
He of no hiſtory made profeſſion,
But of the Proteſtant ſucceſſion:
On all occaſions, ne'er wou'd fail,
At Popery and the FRENCH to rail.
Of BLACKSTONE he had read a part,
And all BURN's JUSTICE knew by heart:
In books that he might waſte no minute,
His poetry had buſineſs in it;
He ne'er had heard of Bards of Greece,
But had read half of "DYER's Fleece;"

To make his ſphere of knowledge wider,
His Georgics, "PHILIPS upon cyder:"
He cou'd produce in proper place,
Three apt quotations from the * "Chace,"
And in the hall, from day to day,
Old ISAAC WALTON's angler lay.

This good and venerable knight,
One daughter had, his ſoul's delight:
For face, no mortal cou'd reſiſt her,
She ſmil'd like HEBE's youngeſt ſiſter:
Her life, as lovely as her face,
Each duty mark'd with every grace;
Her native ſenſe improv'd by reading,
Her native ſweetneſs by good-breeding:

* A Poem by Mr. SOMERVILE.

No pretty ſtarts of feign'd ſurpriſe,
No ſweet minauderies clos'd her eyes;
Led by Simplicity divine,
She pleas'd, and never tried to ſhine;
She gave to Chance each unſchool'd feature,
And left her cauſe to Senſe and Nature.

The Sire of FLORIO, ere he died,
Decreed fair CELIA, FLORIO's bride;
Bade him his lateſt wiſh attend,
And win the daughter of his friend;
When the laſt rites to him were paid,
He charg'd him to addreſs the maid:
Sir GILBERT's heart the wiſh approv'd,
For much his ancient friend he lov'd.

Six rapid months like lightning fly,
And the laſt grey was now thrown by;

And FLORIO,

FLORIO, reluctant, calls to mind
The orders of a Sire too kind:
Yet go he muſt; he muſt fulfil
The hard conditions of the will.
Go, at that precious hour of prime,
Go, at that ſwarming, buſtling time,
When the full Town to joy invites,
Diſtracted with its own delights;
When Pleaſure pours from her full urn,
Each tireſome tranſport in its turn;
When Diſſipation's altars blaze,
And men run mad a thouſand ways;
When, on his tablets, there were found
Engagements for full ſix weeks round;
Muſt leave, with grief and deſperation,
Three packs of cards of invitation,

And all the wearisome delights
Of slavish days, and sleepless nights.
Ye Nymphs, whom tyrant Power drags down,
With hand despotic, from the Town,
When ALMACK's doors wide open stand,
And the gay partner's offer'd hand
Courts to the dance; when steaming rooms,
Fetid with unguents and perfumes,
Invite you to the dear delight
Of well-bred crowds, and mobs polite;
You may conceive what FLORIO felt,
And sympathetically melt;
None else can guess the hardship dire,
To lawns and woodlands to retire,
When, freed from Winter's icy chain,
Glad Nature revels on the plain;

When bluſhing Spring leads on the hours,
And May is prodigal of flow'rs;
When Paſſion warbles thro' the grove,
And all is ſong, and all is love;
When new-born breezes ſweep the vale,
And health adds fragrance to the gale.

Six bays, unconſcious of their weight,
Soon lodg'd him at Sir GILBERT's gate;
His truſty Swiſs, who flew ſtill faſter,
Announc'd th' arrival of his Maſter:
So loud the rap which ſhook the door,
The hall re-echo'd to the roar;
Since firſt the Caſtle walls were rear'd,
So dread a ſound had ne'er been heard;
The din alarm'd the frighten'd deer,
Who in a corner ſlunk for fear;

The Butler thought 'twas beat of drum,
The Steward ſwore the French were come;
It ting'd with red poor FLORIO's face,
He thought himſelf in Portland Place.
Short joy! he enter'd, and the gate
Clos'd on him with its ponderous weight.
Who like Sir GILBERT now was bleſt?
With rapture he embrac'd his gueſt.
Fair CELIA bluſh'd, and FLORIO utter'd
Half ſentences, or rather mutter'd
Diſjointed words—as, "honour! pleaſure!
"Kind!—vaſtly good, Ma'am!—beyond meaſure;"
Tame expletives, with which dull Faſhion
Fills vacancies of ſenſe and paſſion.
Yet, tho' diſciple of cold Art,
FLORIO perceiv'd he had a heart;

He ſaw; and but that Admiration,
Had been too active, too like paſſion,
Or had he been to Ton leſs true,
Cupid had ſhot him thro' and thro';
But, vainly ſpeeds the ſureſt dart,
Where FASHION's mail defends the heart,
The ſhaft her cold repulſion found,
And fell, without the pow'r to wound:
For Faſhion, with a mother's joy,
Dipp'd in her lake the darling boy,
That lake, whoſe chilling waves impart
The gift to freeze the warmeſt heart:
Yet, guarded as he was with phlegm,
With ſuch delight he ey'd the dame,
The Goddeſs ſtrait his peril knew,
And, inſtant, to his ſuccour flew;

But

But all was ſafe; ſhe ſaw and ſmil'd,
And claim'd the triumph of her child.

CELIA a dinner ſtill ſupplied,
Which modiſh luxury might deride:
Yet her diſcreet, well-order'd table,
Tho' ſober, ſtill was hoſpitable.
A modeſt dinner beſt diſplays
The Maſter eats on other days.
And decent Elegance was there,
And Plenty, with her liberal air;
But vulgar plenty gave offence,
And ſhock'd poor FLORIO's nicer ſenſe:
One diſh there was which never fail'd,
CELIA with this each gueſt regal'd;
'Twas ſimple mutton, roaſt, or boil'd,
Sole diſh French cookery has not ſpoil'd.

Tho' rich in game, and ſtor'd with fiſh,
She ne'er forgot her ſtanding diſh.
FLORIO in ſecret wou'd repine,
For FLORIO now but liv'd to dine;
Diſguſted at the conſtant round
For ever at her table found;
He ſcarce cou'd ſtand the ſlender loyn,
But fainted at the ample chine;
Yet ſtill afraid to give offence,
Or ſhock his CELIA's groſſer ſenſe,
Patient he yielded to his fate,
When good Sir GILBERT pil'd his plate;
He bow'd ſubmiſſive, made no queſtion
But that 'twas ſovereign for digeſtion;
But, ſuch was his unlucky whim,
It never wou'd agree with him.

Yet feign'd to praiſe the vulgar treat,
And, if he eat not, ſeem'd to eat.
In ſleep ſad FLORIO hop'd to find,
The pleaſures he had left behind.
He dreamt, and lo! to charm his eyes,
The form of WELTJE ſeem'd to riſe;
The gracious viſion wav'd his wand,
And banquets ſprung to FLORIO's hand;
Th' imaginary ſavours roſe
In tempting odours to his noſe.
A bell, not Fancy's falſe creation,
Gives joyful "note of preparation;"
He ſtarts, he wakes, the bell he hears;
Alas! it rings for morning pray'rs.

But how to ſpend next tedious morning,
Was paſt his poſſible diſcerning;

Unable to amuſe himſelf,
He tumbled every well-rang'd ſhelf;
This book was dull, and that was wiſe,
And this was monſtrous as to ſize.
With eager joy he gobbled down
Whate'er related to the town;
Whate'er look'd ſmall, whate'er look'd new,
Half-bound, or only ſtitch'd in blue;
Old play-bills, ASTLEY's laſt year's feats,
And Opera diſputes in ſheets.
As theſe dear records meet his eyes,
Ghoſts of departed pleaſures riſe;
He lays the book upon the ſhelf,
And leaves the day to ſpend itſelf.

To cheat the tedious hours, whene'er
He ſallied forth to take the air,

His

His ſympathetic ponies knew
Which way their Lord's affections drew,
And, every time he went abroad,
Sought of themſelves the London road;
He aſk'd each mile of every clown,
How far they reckon'd it to town?
And ſtill his nimble ſpirits riſe,
Whilſt thither he directs his eyes;
But when his courſers back he guides,
The ſinking Mercury quick ſubſides.
A week he had reſolv'd to ſtay,
But found a week in every day;
Yet if the gentle maid was by,
Faint pleaſure gliſten'd in his eye;
But when no more the room ſhe grac'd,
The ſlight impreſſion was effac'd.

Whene'er

Whene'er Sir GILBERT's ſporting gueſts
Retail'd old news, or older jeſts,
FLORIO, quite calm, and debonair,
Still humm'd a new Italian air;
He did not even feign to hear 'em,
But plainly ſhew'd he cou'd not bear 'em.
CELIA perceiv'd his ſecret thoughts;
But lik'd the youth with all his faults;
Yet 'twas unlike, ſhe ſoftly ſaid,
The tales of love which ſhe had read,
Where heroes vow'd, and ſigh'd, and knelt;
Nay, 'twas unlike the love ſhe felt:
Tho' to her Sire, with fault'ring tongue,
She oft remark'd,—he was but young;
Confeſs'd his manners wrong in part,
But then—he had ſo good a heart!

His

His intereſt farther to ſecure,
She prais'd his bounty to the poor;
For, votary as he was of art,
He had a kind and melting heart;
Tho', with a ſmile, he us'd to own
He had not time to feel in town;
Not that he bluſh'd to ſhew compaſſion,—
It chanc'd that year to be the faſhion.
At length, to wake Ambition's flame,
A letter from BELLARIO came;
Announcing the ſupreme delight,
Preparing for a certain night,
By FLAVIA fair, return'd from France,
Who took him captive at a glance:
The invitations all were given!
Five hundred cards!—a little heaven!—

A dinner firſt—he wou'd preſent him,
And begg'd that nothing might prevent him.
Whoever wiſh'd a noble air,
Muſt gain it by an *entrée* there;
Of all the glories of the town,
'Twas the firſt paſſport to renown.
Then ridicul'd his rural ſchemes,
His paſtoral ſhades, and purling ſtreams;
Sneer'd at his preſent *brilliant* life,
His poliſh'd Sire, and high-bred Wife!
Thus, doubly to inflame, he tried
His curioſity, and pride.
The youth, with agitated heart,
Prepar'd directly to depart;
But, bound in honour to obey
His father, at no diſtant day,

He promis'd ſoon to haſten down,
But buſineſs call'd him now to town;
Then faintly hints a cold propoſal,
But leaves it to the Knight's diſpoſal;
Stammer'd half words of love and duty,
And mutter'd much of—worth and—beauty;
Something of paſſion then he dropt,
And hop'd his ardour—Here he ſtopt;
For ſome remains of native truth
Fluſh'd in his face, and check'd the youth;
Yet ſtill the ambiguous ſuffuſion
Might paſs for artleſs love's confuſion.
The doating father thought 'twas ſtrange,
But fancied men with times might change;
Yet own'd, nor cou'd he check his tongue,
It was not ſo when he was young.

That was the reign of love he ſwore,
But now thoſe halcyon days are o'er.
In that bleſt age, for honour fam'd,
Love paid the homage Beauty claim'd;
Not that inſipid, daudling Cupid,
With heart ſo hard, and air ſo ſtupid,
Who coldly courts the charms which lie
In Affectation's half-clos'd eye.
Love then was honeſt, genuine paſſion,
And manly gallantry the faſhion;
Yet pure as ardent was the flame
Excited by the beauteous dame;
Hope cou'd ſubſiſt on ſlender bounties,
And Courtiers gallop'd o'er two counties,
The Ball's fair partner to behold,
Or humbly hope—ſhe caught no cold.

But mark how much Love's annals mend!
Shou'd Beauty's Goddeſs now deſcend;
On ſome adventure ſhou'd ſhe come,
To grace a modiſh drawing-room,
With radiant eye, and heavenly air;
What Beau wou'd hand her to her chair?
Vain were that motion which betray'd,
The goddeſs was no earth-born maid;
If noxious FARO's baleful ſpright,
With rites infernal rul'd the night,
The group ſo bent on play and pelf,
VENUS might call her doves herſelf.

As FLORIO paſs'd the Caſtle-gate,
His ſpirits ſeem to loſe their weight;
He feaſts his lately vacant mind
With all the joys he hopes to find;

Yet on whate'er his fancies brood,
The form of CELIA wou'd intrude;
Howe'er his random thoughts might fly,
Her gentle graces fill'd his eye;
Nor was th' obtruſive viſion o'er,
E'en when he reach'd BELLARIO's door;
The friends embrac'd with warm delight,
And FLAVIA's praiſes crown'd the night.

Soon dawn'd the day which was to ſhew
Glad FLORIO what was heaven below.
FLAVIA, admir'd wherever known,
Th' acknowledg'd Empreſs of bon-ton,
O'er FASHION's wayward kingdom reigns,
And holds BELLARIO in her chains.
Various her powers; a wit by day,
By night unmatch'd for lucky play.

The flattering, faſhionable tribe,
Each ſtray bon-mot to her aſcribe;
And all her "little ſenate" own
She made the beſt charade in town;
Her midnight ſuppers always drew
Whate'er was fine, whate'er was new.
There oft the brighteſt fame you'd ſee
The victim of a repartee;
For Slander's Prieſteſs ſtill ſupplies
The ſpotleſs for the ſacrifice.
Who at her poliſh'd table ſit,
The ſummit reach of modiſh wit,
The *perſiflage*, th' unfeeling jeer,
The civil, grave, ironic ſneer;
The laugh, which, more than cenſure, wounds,
Which, more than argument, confounds.

Th'

Th' exalted deed, which wou'd engage
The wonder of a nobler age,
With unbelieving ſcorn is heard,
Or elſe to ſelfiſh ends referr'd;
To Vanity's light effervescence,
Aſcribe they Virtue's pureſt eſſence.
When Malice longs to throw her dart,
But finds no vulnerable part,
Becauſe the Virtues all defend,
At every paſs, their guarded friend;
Yet, by one ſlight inſinuation,
One ſcarce perceiv'd exaggeration,
Sly Ridicule, with half a word,
Can fix her ſtigma of—abſurd;
Her cruel cauſtics deeply pain,
And ſcars indelible remain.

Supreme

Supreme in wit, ſupreme in play,
Deſpotic FLAVIA all obey;
Small were her natural charms of face,
But heighten'd with each foreign grace;
But what ſubdued BELLARIO's ſoul
Beyond Philoſophy's controul,
Her daily table was as fine
As if ten Rajahs were to dine;
She every day produc'd ſuch fiſh as
Wou'd gratify the nice APICIUS,
Or realize what we think fabulous
I'th' bill of fare of ELAGABALUS.
Yet ſtill the natural taſte was cheated;
'Twas delug'd in ſome ſauce one hated.
All that can ſurfeit, or can cloy,
Soupes Santés, which the health deſtroy,

And, ever on her ſumptuous board,
The ſavoury pye of PERIGORD;
All ſauce! all ſweetmeat! all confection!
All poignancy! and all perfection!
Rich Entremets, whoſe name none knows,
Ragouts, French Tourtes, and Fricandeaux,
Might picque the ſenſuality
O'-th' hogs of EPICURUS' ſty;
Yet all ſo foreign, and ſo fine,
'Twas eaſier to admire, than dine.

O! if the Muſe had power to tell
Each diſh, no Muſe has power to ſpell!
Great Goddeſs of the French Cuiſine!
Not with unhallow'd hands I mean
To violate thy ſecret ſhade,
Which eyes prophane ſhall ne'er invade:

No! of thy dignity ſupreme,
I, with "myſterious reverence," deem!
Or, ſhou'd I venture with raſh hand,
The vulgar wou'd not underſtand;
Th' initiated only know
The raptures keen thy rites beſtow.
Thus much to tell I lawful deem,
Thy works are never what they ſeem;
Thy will this general law has paſt,
That nothing of itſelf ſhall taſte.
Thy word this high decree enacted,
"In all be NATURE counteracted!"
Conceive, who can, the perfect bliſs,
For 'tis not given to all to gueſs,
The rapturous joy BELLARIO found,
When thus his ev'ry wiſh was crown'd;

To Florio, as the beſt of friends,
One diſh he ſecretly commends;
Then hinted, as a ſpecial favour,
What gave it that delicious flavour;
A myſtery he ſo much reveres,
He never to unhallow'd ears
Wou'd truſt it, but to him wou'd ſhow
How far true Friendſhip's power cou'd go.

Florio at firſt with tranſport eat,
And marvell'd at the ſumptuous *fête*.
But ſoon his pleaſure was deſtroy'd,
Soon every craving ſenſe was cloy'd.
A little warp his taſte had gain'd,
Which, unperceiv'd, till now, remain'd;
For, from himſelf he wou'd conceal
The change he did not chuſe to feel;

He almoſt wiſh'd he cou'd be picking
An unſophiſticated chicken;
And when he caſt his eyes around,
And not one ſimple morſel found,
O give me, was his ſecret wiſh,
My charming CELIA's Standing Diſh!
Now Nature, ſtruggling for her rights,
Lets in ſome little, caſual lights,
And Love combines to war with Faſhion,
Tho' yet 'twas but an infant paſſion:
The practis'd FLAVIA tried each art
Of ſly attack to ſteal his heart;
(Her forc'd civilities oppreſs,
Inſulting thro' mere graciouſneſs;)
While many a gay, intrepid dame,
By bold aſſault eſſay'd the ſame.

Fill'd with diſguſt, he ſtrove to fly
The artful glance, and fearleſs eye;
Their jargon he but faintly praiſes,
Nor echoes back their ſlimſy phraſes.
He felt not CELIA's powers of face,
Till weigh'd againſt bon-ton grimace;
Nor half her genuine beauties taſted,
'Till with factitious charms contraſted.
No moment's liberty he found,
Th' induſtrious harpies hover'd round;
By force and flattery circumvented,
To play, reluctant, he conſented;
Each Dame her power of pleaſing tried,
To fix the novice by her ſide;
Of *Pigeons*, he the very beſt,
Who wealth, with ignorance, poſſeſt:

But

But FLAVIA's rhetoric beſt perſwades,
That Sybil leads him to the ſhades;
The fatal leaves around the room,
Prophetic, tell th' approaching doom!
Yet, different from the tale of old,
'Twas *ſhe* who pluck'd the tempting gold;
Her arts the ponderous purſe exhauſt,
A borrow'd thouſand, ſtak'd, and loſt,
Wakes him to ſenſe and ſhame again,
Nor force, nor fraud cou'd more obtain.

He roſe, indignant, to attend
The ſummons of a ruin'd friend,
Whom keen BELLARIO's arts betray
To all the depths of deſperate play;
The youth, unconſcious of deceit,
Was plunder'd of his whole eſtate;

Too late he look'd for friendſhip's aid,
A beggar in a moment made.

And now, with horror, FLORIO views
The wild confuſion which enſues;
Marks where th' infernal furies hold
Their orgies foul o'er heaps of gold;
And demons dire appear to riſe,
Guarding the horrid myſteries;
Marks how deforming paſſions tear
The boſoms of the loſing fair;
How haggard looks, convulſive faces,
Baniſh the frighten'd loves, and graces!
Touch'd with diſdain, with horror fir'd,
He thought of CELIA, and retir'd.

That night no ſleep his eyelids preſt,
He thought; and thought's a foe to reſt:

Or

Or if, by chance, he clos'd his eyes,
What hideous ſpectres round him riſe!
Diſtemper'd Fancy wildly brings
The broken images of things;
His ruin'd friend, with eye-ball fixt,
Swallowing the draught Deſpair had mixt;
The frantic wife beſide him ſtands,
With burſting heart, and wringing hands;
And every horror dreams beſtow,
Of pining Want, or raving Woe.

Next morn, to check, or cheriſh thought,
His Library's retreat he ſought;
He view'd each book, with cold regard,
Of ſerious ſage, or lighter bard;
At length, among the motley band,
The IDLER fell into his hand;

Th' alluring title caught his eye,
It promis'd cold inanity:
He read with pleaſure and ſurpriſe,
And found 'twas charming, tho' 'twas wiſe;
His tea grew cold, whilſt he, unheeding,
Purſu'd this new-diſcover'd reading.
He wonder'd at the change he found,
Th' elaſtic ſpirits nimbly bound;
Time ſlipt, without diſguſt, away,
While many a card unanſwer'd lay;
Three papers reeking from the preſs,
Three Pamphlets thin, in azure dreſs,
Ephemeral literature well known,
The lie and ſcandal of the town;
Poiſon of letters, morals, time!
Aſſaſſin of our day's freſh prime!

These, on his table, all that day,
Unthought of, and neglected lay.
Florio had now full three hours read,
Hours which he us'd to waste in bed;
His pulse beat Virtue's vigorous tone,
The reason to himself unknown;
And if he stopp'd to seek the cause,
Fair Celia's image fill'd the pause.
And now, announc'd, Bellario's name
Had almost quench'd the new-born flame:
"Admit him," was the ready word
Which first escap'd him, not unheard;
When sudden, to his mental sight,
Uprose the horrors of last night;
His plunder'd friend before him stands,
And—"not at home," his firm commands.

He felt the conqueſt, as a joy,
The firſt temptation wou'd deſtroy.
He knew that next day Hymen's hand,
Shou'd tack the ſlight and ſlippery band,
Which, in looſe bondage, wou'd enſnare
BELLARIO bright, and FLAVIA fair.
Oft had he promis'd to attend
The nuptials of his happy friend:
He longs to go—but yet he fears;
At length a bolder deed he dares;
To CELIA he reſolves to fly,
And catch freſh virtue from her eye;
Tho' three full weeks did yet remain,
Ere he engag'd to come again.
This plan he tremblingly embrac'd,
With doubtful zeal, and fluttering haſte;

Nor ventur'd he one card to read,
Which might his virtuous ſcheme impede;
Each note, he dreaded, might betray him,
And ſhudder'd leſt each rap ſhou'd ſtay him.
Behold him ſeated in his chaiſe;
With face that ſelf-diſtruſt betrays;
He hazards not a ſingle glance,
Nor thro' the glaſſes peeps by chance,
Leſt ſome old friend, or haunt well known,
Shou'd melt his reſolution down;
Faſt as his foaming courſers fly,
Hyde Park attracts his half-rais'd eye;
He ſtole one fearful, conſcious look,
Then dropt his eye upon his book.
Long as he view'd AUGUSTA's tow'rs,
The ſight relax'd his thinking pow'rs;

In

In vain he better plans revolves,
The ſoftening ſight his ſoul diſſolves;
The tow'rs once loſt, the ſmoke his eyes
Purſue, while yet its volumes riſe:
Soon as he got entirely clear
From this enfeebling atmoſphere,
His mind was brac'd, his ſpirits light,
His heart was gay, his humour bright;
Thus feeling, at his inmoſt ſoul,
The ſweet reward of ſelf-controul;
Impatient now, and all alive,
He thought he never ſhou'd arrive;
At length he enter'd with delight,
And, ſelf-announc'd, embrac'd the knight:
The youth his joy unfeign'd expreſt,
The knight with joy receiv'd his gueſt,

And own'd, with no unwilling tongue,
'Twas done like men when he was young.
For CELIA, not a word ſhe ſaid,
But bluſh'd, "celeſtial, roſy red!"
Her heighten'd charms tranſport the youth,
Who promis'd everlaſting truth.
CELIA, in honour of the day,
Reſolv'd her table to diſplay;
Such was the charm her ſweetneſs gave,
He thought her Wedgwood had been *ſève*;
Her taſte diffus'd a gracious air,
And neat Simplicity was there,
Whoſe ſecret power, tho' ſilent, great is,
The loveliеſt of the ſweet Penates.
FLORIO had now forgot to wiſh
For aught beſides the STANDING DISH.

Sir

Sir GILBERT's port he warmly praiſes,
And carefully avoids French phraſes;
With patience hears a diſſertation
On Land-tax, and a ruin'd nation;
Liſtens to many a tedious tale
Of poachers, who deſerv'd a jail;
Heard all the buſineſs of the Quorum,
Of hapleſs damſels brought before 'em;
Nor ever humm'd a ſingle air,
While good Sir GILBERT fill'd his chair.

Abroad, with joy and grateful pride,
He walks, with CELIA by his ſide:
A thouſand cheerful thoughts ariſe,
Each rural ſcene enchants his eyes;
With tranſport he begins to look
On Nature's all-inſtructive book;

No,

No objects now ſeem mean, or low,
Which point to HIM from whom they flow.
A berry or a bud excites
A chain of reaſoning which delights,
And, ſpite of ſceptic ebullitions,
Proves Atheiſts not the beſt Logicians.
A tree, a brook, a blade of graſs,
Suggeſts reflections as they paſs,
'Till FLORIO with a ſigh, confeſt
The ſimpleſt pleaſures are the beſt!
BELLARIO's ſyſtems ſink in air,
He feels the PERFECT, GOOD, and FAIR.
When call'd to dreſs, that Titus wore
A wig the alter'd FLORIO ſwore;
Or elſe, in eſtimating time,
He ne'er had mark'd it as a crime,

That he had loſt but one day's bleſſing,
When we ſo many loſe, by dreſſing.

The reſt, ſuffice it now to ſay,
Was finiſh'd in the uſual way.

Cupid, impatient for his hour,
Revil'd ſlow Themis' tedious power,
Whoſe parchment legends, ſigning, ſealing,
Are cruel forms for Love to deal in.

At length, to Florio's eager eyes,
Behold the day of bliſs ariſe!
The flaming ſun illumes the globe;
The burning torch, the ſaffron robe,
Juſt as of old, glad Hymen wears,
And Cupid, as of old, appears
In Hymen's train; ſo ſtrange the caſe,
They hardly knew each other's face;

Yet both confeſs'd, with glowing heart,
They never were deſign'd to part.
This ſelf-ſame ſun, and where's the wonder?
Sees FLAVIA's ſlight bands ſnapt aſunder:
BELLARIO ſues for a divorce,
And both purſue their ſeparate courſe.
Reader! thy clemency to court,
Tho' long the Tale, the Moral's ſhort;
Yet dare I, ſpite of Critic Satire,
Suppoſe the Standing Diſh GOOD NATURE?
O! gentleſt bleſſing man can find!
Sweet ſoother of the ruffled mind!
As the ſoft powers of oil aſſwage
Of Ocean's waves the furious rage;
Lull to repoſe the boiling tide,
Whoſe billows, charm'd to reſt, ſubſide;

Smooth the vext boſom of the deep,
'Till every trembling motion ſleep!—
Thy ſoft enchantments thus controul
The tumult of the troubled ſoul!
By labour worn, by care oppreſt,
On THEE the weary mind ſhall reſt;
From buſineſs, and diſtraction free,
Delighted, ſhall return to THEE;
To THEE the aching heart ſhall cling,
And find the peace it does not bring.

Ye candidates for Earth's beſt prize,
Domeſtic Life's ſweet charities!
O! if your erring eye once ſtrays
From ſmooth Good-nature's level ways;
If e'er, in evil hour betray'd,
You chuſe ſome vain, fantaſtic maid,

On ſuch for bliſs if you depend,
Without the means you ſeek the end;
A pyramid you ſtrive to place,
The point inverted for the baſe;
You hope, in ſpite of Reaſon's laws,
A conſequence without a cauſe.

And you, bright nymphs, who bleſs our eyes
With all that ſkill, that Taſte ſupplies;
Learn, that accompliſhments at beſt,
Serve but for garniſh in Life's feaſt;
Yet ſtill with theſe the poliſh'd wife
Shou'd deck the feaſt of human life;
Wit a poor Standing Diſh wou'd prove,
Tho' 'tis an excellent Remove;
Howe'er your tranſient gueſts may praiſe
Your gay parade on gala days,

Yet

Yet know, your huſband ſtill will wiſh,
Good-nature for his Standing Diſh.

Still, in Life's *Faſti*, you preſume
Eternal holidays will come;
But, in its higheſt, happieſt lot,
O! let it never be forgot,
Life is not an Olympic game,
Where ſports and plays muſt gain the fame;
Each month is not the month of May,
Nor is each day a holiday.
Tho' wit may gild Life's atmoſphere,
When all is lucid, calm, and clear,
In bleak Affliction's dreary hour,
The brighteſt flaſh muſt loſe its power;
While Temper, in the darkeſt ſkies,
A kindly light and warmth ſupplies.

Divine

Divine GOOD-NATURE! 'tis decreed,
The happieſt ſtill thy charm ſhou'd need.
Sweet Architect! rais'd by thy hands,
Fair Concord's Temple firmly ſtands:
Tho' Senſe, tho' Prudence rear the pile,
Tho' each approving Virtue ſmile,
Some ſudden guſt, nor rare the caſe,
May ſhake the building to its baſe,
Unleſs, to guard againſt ſurpriſes,
On thy firm arch the ſtructure riſes.

FLORIO.

Divine Good-NATURE! 'tis decreed,
The happier fill thy charm'd throng'd meed.
Sweet Architect! rais'd by thy hands,
Fair Concord's Temple firmly stands:
Tho' Scorn, the Prudence fear the pile,
Tho' each approving Virtue smile,
Some hidden guilt, nor rare the calm,
May shake the building to its base;
Trials, to guard against surprise,
On thy firm arch the structure rise.

THE

BAS BLEU:

OR,

CONVERSATION.

ADDRESSED TO MRS. VESEY.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Trifle owes its birth and name to the miſtake of a Foreigner of Diſtinction, who gave the literal appellation of the *Bas-bleu*, to a ſmall party of friends, who had been ſometimes called, by way of pleaſantry, the Blue Stockings. The ſlight performance, occaſioned by this little circumſtance, was never intended to appear in print: It is, in general, too local, and too perſonal for publication; and was only written with a wiſh to amuſe the amiable Lady to whom it is addreſſed, and a few partial friends. But copies having been multiplied, far beyond the intention of the Author, ſhe has been adviſed to publiſh it, leſt it ſhould ſteal into the world in a ſtate of ſtill greater imperfection; though ſhe is almoſt aſhamed to take refuge in ſo hackneyed an apology, however true.

THE
BAS BLEU.

VESEY! of Verſe the judge and friend!
Awhile my idle ſtrain attend:
Not with the days of early Greece,
I mean to ope' my ſlender piece;
The rare Sympoſium to proclaim,
Which crown'd th' Athenians' ſocial name;
Or how ASPASIA's parties ſhone,
The firſt *Bas-bleu* at Athens known;

Nor need I ſtop my tale, to ſhew,
At leaſt to Readers ſuch as you,
How all that Rome eſteem'd polite,
Supp'd with LUCULLUS every night;
LUCULLUS, who, from Pontus come,
Brought conqueſts, and brought cherries home:
Name but the ~~ſuppers in th' Apollo,~~ ——
What claſſic images will follow!
How wit flew round, while each might take
Conchylia from the Lucrine lake;
And Attic Salt, and Garum Sauce,
And Lettuce from the Iſle of Cos;
The firſt and laſt from Greece tranſplanted,
Us'd here—becauſe the rhyme I wanted:
How Pheaſants' heads, with coſt collected,
And Phenicopters' ſtood neglected,

To laugh at Scipio's lucky hit,
Pompey's bon-mot, or Cæsar's wit!
Intemperance, liſt'ning to the tale,
Forgot the Mullet growing * ſtale;
And Admiration, balanc'd, hung
'Twixt Peacocks' brains, and Tully's tongue.
I ſhall not ſtop to dwell on theſe,
But be as epic as I pleaſe,
And plunge at once in medias res.
To prove the privilege I plead,
I'll quote ſome Greek I cannot read;
Stunn'd by Authority, you yield,
And I, not Reaſon, keep the field.
Long was Society e'er-run
By Whiſt, that deſolating Hun;

* Seneca ſays, that in his time the Romans were arrived at ſuch a pitch of luxury, that the Mullet was reckoned ſtale which did not die in the hands of the gueſt.

Long did Quadrille deſpotic ſit,
That Vandal of colloquial wit;
And Converſation's ſetting light
Lay half-obſcur'd in Gothic night;
Till Leo's triple crown, to you,
Boscawen ſage, bright Montagu,
Divided, fell;—your cares in haſte
Reſcued the ravag'd realms of Taſte;
And Lyttelton's accompliſh'd name,
And witty Pultney ſhar'd the fame;
The Men, not bound by pedant rules,
Nor Ladies' *precieuſes ridicules*;
For poliſh'd Walpole ſhew'd the way,
How Wits may be both learn'd and gay;
And Carter taught the female train,
The deeply wiſe are never vain;

And ſhe, who SHAKESPEARE's wrongs redreſt,
Prov'd that the brighteſt are the beſt.

O! how unlike the wit that fell,
RAMBOUILLET *! at thy quaint Hotel;
Where point, and turn, and equivoque,
Diſtorted every word they ſpoke!
All ſo intolerably bright,
Plain Common Senſe was put to flight;
Each ſpeaker, ſo ingenious ever,
'Twas tireſome to be quite ſo clever;
There twiſted Wit forgot to pleaſe,
And Mood and Figure baniſh'd eaſe:
Poor exil'd Nature houſeleſs ſtray'd,
'Till SEVIGNE receiv'd the maid.

* The Society at the Hotel de RAMBOUILLET, though compoſed of polite and ingenious perſons, was much tainted with affectation and falſe taſte. See VOITURE, MENAGE, &c.

Tho'

Tho' here ſhe comes to bleſs our iſle,
Not univerſal is her ſmile.
Muſe! ſnatch the lyre which CAMBRIDGE ſtrung,
When he the *empty ball-room* ſung;
'Tis tun'd above thy pitch, I doubt,
And thou no muſic wou'dſt draw out;
Yet, in a lower note, preſume
To ſing the full, dull Drawing-room.

Where the dire *Circle* keeps its ſtation,
Each common phraſe is an oration;
And cracking fans, and whiſp'ring Miſſes,
Compoſe their Converſation bliſſes.
The Matron marks the goodly ſhew,
While the tall daughter eyes the Beau—
The frigid Beau!—Ah! luckleſs fair,
'Tis not for you that ſtudied air;

Ah!

Ah! not for you that ſidelong glance,
And all that charming nonchalance;
Ah! not for you the three long hours
He worſhip'd the "Coſmetic powers;"
That finiſh'd head which breathes perfume,
And kills the nerves of half the room;
And all the murders meant to lie
In that large, languiſhing, grey eye;
Deſiſt;—leſs wild th' attempt wou'd be,
To warm the ſnows of Rhodope:
Too cold to feel, too proud to feign,
For him you're wiſe and fair in vain.

Chill ſhade of that affected Peer,
Who dreaded Mirth! come ſafely here;
For here no vulgar joy effaces
Thy rage for poliſh, ton, and graces.

Cold Ceremony's leaden hand,
Waves o'er the room her poppy wand;
Arrives the ſtranger; every gueſt
Conſpires to torture the diſtreſt;
At once they riſe—ſo have I ſeen—
You gueſs the ſimile I mean,
Take what compariſon you pleaſe,
The crowded ſtreets, the ſwarming bees,
The pebbles on the ſhores that lie,
The ſtars, which form the galaxy;
This ſerves t' embelliſh what is ſaid,
And ſhews, beſides, that one has read;—
At once they riſe—th' aſtoniſh'd gueſt
Back in a corner ſlinks, diſtreſt;
Scar'd at the many bowing round,
And ſhock'd at her own voice's ſound,

Forgot

Forgot the thing ſhe meant to ſay,
Her words, half-utter'd, die away;
In ſweet oblivion down ſhe ſinks,
And of her ten appointments thinks:
While her loud neighbour on the right,
Boaſts what ſhe has to do to-night;
So very much, you'd ſwear her pride is
To match the labours of ALCIDES;
'Tis true, in hyperbolic meaſure,
She nobly calls her labours *Pleaſure*;
In this, unlike ALCMENA's ſon,
She never means they ſhou'd be done;
Her fancy of no *limits* dreams,
No! *ne plus ultra* bounds her ſchemes;
Fir'd at th' idea, out ſhe flounces,
And a new Martyr JOHN announces.

We pass the pleasures vast and various
Of Routs, not social, but gregarious;
And, pleas'd, to gentler scenes retreat,
Where Conversation holds her seat.

Small were that art which wou'd ensure
The Circle's boasted quadrature:
See VESEY's plastic genius make
A Circle every figure take;
Nay, shapes and forms which woul'd defy
All science of Geometry,
Isosceles, and Parallel,
Names hard to speak, and hard to spell!
Th' enchantress wav'd her wand, and spoke!
Her potent wand the Circle broke;
The social Spirits hover round,
And bless the liberated ground.

Aſk you what charms this gift diſpenſe?
'Tis the ſtrong ſpell of COMMON SENSE.
Away fell Ceremony flew,
And with her bore Detraction too.
Nor only Geometric Art,
Does this preſiding power impart;
But Chymiſts too, who want the eſſence,
Which makes or mars all coaleſcence,
Of her the ſecret rare might get,
How different kinds amalgamate:
And he, who wilder ſtudies choſe,
Find here a new metempſychoſe;
How forms can other forms aſſume,
Within her Pythagoric room;
Or be, and ſtranger is th' event,
The very things which Nature meant;

Nor ſtrive, by art and affectation,
To croſs their genuine deſtination.
Here ſober Ducheſſes are ſeen,
Chaſte Wits, and Critics void of ſpleen;
Phyſicians, fraught with real ſcience,
And Whigs and Tories in alliance;
Poets, fulfilling Chriſtian duties,
Juſt Lawyers, reaſonable Beauties;
Biſhops who preach, and Peers who pay,
And Counteſſes who ſeldom play;
Learn'd Antiquaries, who, from college,
Reject the ruſt, and bring the knowledge;
And, hear it, age, believe it, youth,
Polemics, really ſeeking truth;
And Travellers of that rare tribe,
Who've *ſeen* the countries they deſcribe;

Ladies who point, nor think me partial,
An Epigram as well as MARTIAL;
Yet in all female worth ſucceed,
As well as thoſe who cannot read.

Right pleaſant were the taſk, I ween,
To name the groupes which fill the ſcene;
But Rhyme's of ſuch faſtidious nature,
She proudly ſcorns all Nomenclature,
Nor grace our Northern names her lips,
Like HOMER's Catalogue of Ships.

Once—faithful Memory! heave a ſigh,
Here ROSCIUS gladden'd every eye.
Why comes not MARO? Far from town,
He rears the Urn to Taſte, and BROWN;
His Engliſh garden breathes perfume,
And promiſes perennial bloom.

Here,

Here, rigid CATO, awful Sage!
Bold Cenſor of a thoughtleſs age,
Once dealt his pointed moral round,
And, not unheeded, fell the ſound;
The Muſe his honour'd memory weeps,
For CATO now with ROSCIUS ſleeps!
Here once HORTENSIUS lov'd to ſit,
Apoſtate now from ſocial Wit:
Ah! why in wrangling ſenates waſte
The nobleſt parts, the happieſt taſte?
Why Democratic Thunders wield,
And quit the Muſes' calmer field?
Taſte thou the gentler joys they give;
With HORACE and with LELIUS live.

Hail, Converſation, ſoothing Power,
Sweet Goddeſs of the ſocial hour!

Not

Not with more heart-felt warmth, at leaſt,
Does LELIUS bend, thy true High Prieſt,
Than I, the loweſt of thy train,
Theſe field-flow'rs bring to deck thy fane;
Who to thy ſhrine like him can haſte,
With warmer zeal, or purer taſte?
O may thy worſhip long prevail,
And thy true votaries never fail!
Long may thy poliſh'd altars blaze
With wax-lights' undiminiſh'd rays!
Still be thy nightly offerings paid,
Libations large of Limonade!
On ſilver Vaſes, loaded, riſe
The biſcuits' ample ſacrifice!
Nor be the milk-white ſtreams forgot
Of thirſt-aſſuaging, cool orgeat;

Riſe, incenſe pure from fragrant Tea,
Delicious incenſe, worthy Thee!
Hail, Converſation, heav'nly fair,
Thou bliſs of life, and balm of care!
Call forth the long-forgotten knowlege
Of ſchool, of travel, and of college!
For thee, beſt ſolace of his toil!
The ſage conſumes his midnight oil;
And keeps late vigils, to produce
Materials for thy future uſe.
If none behold, ah! wherefore fair?
Ah! wherefore wiſe, if none muſt hear?
Our intellectual ore muſt ſhine,
Not ſlumber, idly, in the mine.
Let Education's moral mint
The nobleſt images imprint;

Let Taſte her curious touchſtone hold,
To try if ſtandard be the gold;
But 'tis thy commerce, Converſation,
Muſt give it uſe by circulation;
That nobleſt commerce of mankind,
Whoſe precious merchandize is MIND!

What ſtoic Traveller wou'd try
A ſterile ſoul, and parching ſky,
Or dare th' intemperate Northern zone,
If what he ſaw muſt ne'er be known?
For this he bids his home farewell,
The joy of ſeeing is to tell.
Truſt me, he never wou'd have ſtirr'd,
Were he forbid to ſpeak a word;
And Curioſity wou'd ſleep,
If her own ſecrets ſhe muſt keep:

The bliſs of telling what is paſt,
Becomes her rich reward at laſt.
Yet not from low deſire to ſhine,
Does Genius toil in Learning's Mine;
Not to indulge in idle viſion,
But ſtrike new light by ſtrong colliſion.

O'er books the mind inactive lies,
Books, the mind's food, not exerciſe!
Her vigorous wing ſhe ſcarcely feels,
'Till uſe the lateſt ſtrength reveals;
Her ſlumbering energies call'd forth,
She riſes, conſcious of her worth;
And, at her new-found powers elated,
Thinks them not rous'd, but new created.

Enlighten'd ſpirits! you, who know
What charms from poliſh'd converſe flow,

Speak, for you can, the pure delight
When kindred ſympathies unite;
When correſpondent taſtes impart
Communion ſweet from heart to heart;
You ne'er the cold gradations need
Which vulgar ſouls to union lead;
No dry diſcuſſion to unfold
The meaning, caught as ſoon as told:
But ſparks electric only ſtrike
On ſouls electrical alike;
The flaſh of Intellect expires,
Unleſs it meet congenial fires.
The language to th' Elect alone
Is, like the Maſon's myſtery, known;
In vain th' unerring ſign is made
To him who is not of the *Trade*.

What lively pleaſure to divine,
The thought implied, the hinted line,
To feel Alluſion's artful force,
And trace the Image to its ſource!
Quick Memory blends her ſcatter'd rays,
'Till Fancy kindles at the blaze;
The works of ages ſtart to view,
And ancient Wit elicits new.

But wit and parts if thus we praiſe,
What nobler altars ſhou'd we raiſe,
Thoſe ſacrifices cou'd we ſee
Which Wit, O Virtue! makes to Thee.
At once the riſing thought to daſh,
To quench at once the burſting flaſh!
The ſhining Miſchief to ſubdue,
And loſe the praiſe, and pleaſure too!

This is high Principle's controul!
This is true continence of ſoul!
Bluſh, heroes, at your cheap renown,
A vanquiſh'd realm, a plunder'd town!
Your conqueſts were to gain a name,
This conqueſt triumphs over Fame;
So pure its eſſence, 'twere deſtroy'd
If known, and if commended, void.
Amidſt the brighteſt truths believ'd,
Amidſt the faireſt deeds atchiev'd,
Shall ſtand recorded and admir'd,
That Virtue ſunk what Wit inſpir'd!
But let the letter'd, and the fair,
And, chiefly, let the Wit beware;
You, whoſe warm ſpirits never fail,
Forgive the hint which ends my tale.

Tho'

Tho' Science nurs'd you in her bow'rs,
Tho' Fancy crown your brow with flowers,
Each thought, tho' bright Invention fill,
Tho' Attic bees each word diſtil;
Yet, if one gracious power refuſe
Her gentle influence to infuſe,
In vain ſhall liſtening crowds approve,
They'll praiſe you, but they will not love.
What is this power, you're loth to mention,
This charm, this witchcraft? 'tis ATTENTION:
Mute Angel, yes; thy looks diſpenſe
The ſilence of intelligence;
Thy graceful form I well diſcern,
In act to liſten and to learn;
'Tis Thou for talents ſhalt obtain
That pardon Wit wou'd hope in vain;

Thy wond'rous power, thy ſecret charm,
Shall Envy of her ſting diſarm;
Thy ſilent flattery ſooths our ſpirit,
And we forgive eclipſing merit;
The ſweet atonement ſcreens the fault,
And love and praiſe are cheaply bought.

With mild complacency to hear,
Tho' ſomewhat long the tale appear,—
'Tis more than Wit, 'tis moral Beauty,
'Tis Pleaſure riſing out of Duty.

11 : 7 : 49

THE END.

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